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LAW ENFORCEMENT TRAINING ENHANCES PEDESTRIAN SAFETY

***More Than 60 Police Officers Participate;
Training Supports “12 Months of Safety Goal” of Saving Lives***

COLLEGE PARK, MD (March 24, 2004) – “*Look out for each other!*” is the message highway safety advocates and law enforcement want motorists and pedestrians to remember. As part of a multi-jurisdictional pedestrian safety enforcement effort, police officers from across the State today completed a two-day training workshop. Officers learned tactics for increasing pedestrian safety and how to more effectively enforce pedestrian safety laws.

“We want to send a strong message that failing to stop for pedestrians in crosswalks will not be tolerated. Motorists need to understand that only a moment of inattention or distraction can seriously injure or take a pedestrian’s life,” said Officer Matt Anderson, University of Maryland Department of Public Safety.

Law enforcement agencies from Anne Arundel, Baltimore, Dorchester, Harford, Howard, Montgomery, Prince George’s, and Washington counties, Ocean City and Baltimore City have received more than \$200,000 in funding from the State Highway Administration’s (SHA’s) Maryland Highway Safety Office (MHSO) to combat the State’s persistent pedestrian fatality and injury problem. The program is designed to alert both drivers and pedestrians to the important role they play in pedestrian safety.

Each year in Maryland, pedestrian crashes account for an average of 105 fatalities and nearly 3,000 injuries. Participants in this innovative program hope to alert the public that both the motorist *and* the pedestrian play an important role in a crash.

“Motorists need to remember a few of the rules they were taught in driver’s education and pedestrians need to be reminded that sharing the road with cars means they must be responsible and obey signals too,” said Officer Fred Denker of the Baltimore County Police Department.

(More)

Now in its third year, the enforcement effort is being enhanced and energized with a two-day training workshop for officers who are responsible for performing on-the-street enforcement. The classes were led by nationally recognized speakers John Moffat, former Director of the Washington Traffic Safety Commission and Dan Burden, Executive Director for Walkable Communities Inc. The two-day program wrapped up with a field enforcement operation on US 1 near the Kinko's in downtown College Park.

"It's shocking to hear the statistics: more than 40 percent of all drivers - even with police presence - do not stop for pedestrians in the crosswalk," said George Branyan, the MHSO's Pedestrian & Special Programs Coordinator. "It is important that pedestrians feel safe in a crosswalk before we can expect them to regularly use one."

Maryland State Highway Law states that drivers must always stop for pedestrians and that pedestrians must use crosswalks and obey pedestrian signals. The exact wording is: (Section 21-502, MD Vehicle Law) "The driver of a vehicle shall come to a stop when the pedestrian crossing the roadway in a crosswalk is (i) on the half of the roadway on which the vehicle is traveling; or (ii) approaching within an adjacent lane of the other half of the roadway." This statute does not apply to intersections where a traffic control signal is in operation. At signalized intersections, drivers, when turning right or left, must yield to pedestrians legally in the intersection or adjacent crosswalk (Section 21-202 (c)).

For more information, log onto www.marylandroads.com and click on the *Crashes Are No Accident* section or call toll-free 1-888-963-0307.

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Editor's Note: For more information about Maryland's pedestrian safety enforcement program, please contact George Branyan or Timothy Richards of the Maryland Highway Safety Office at 410-787-4072.

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